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TAGS: [KVPR](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CVIS](#) [ASEC](#) [KHLs](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: GREECE: RESPONSE TO S/CT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
ON HOST GOVERNMENT PRACTICES: INFORMATION COLLECTION,
SCREENING, AND SHARING

REF: SECSTATE 133921

Classified By: Charge D'Affaire Thomas Countryman for 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(SBU) Embassy Country Team has assembled the following responses to REFTEL request for information on the government of Greece's (GOG) practices on information collection, screening, and sharing. Narrative responses below are keyed to specific subject questions in refTel. Please note the secret classification for portions of this cable.

SIPDIS

Watchlisting

2.(S) A. Watchlisting: If host government maintains a "watchlist," how many records does the watchlist contain, and how many are terrorist-related? Which ministry or office maintains the watchlist?

-- As a member of the Schengen Information System (SIS), the GOG reports that it has access to EU watchlists, in addition to Interpol, and its own national criminal database. These databases are maintained by the Hellenic National Police (HNP). The GOG has not disclosed to Post how many of those records are terrorist-related. The U.S. Terrorist Screening Center's (TSC) watchlist is updated daily, but it is not disseminated to the GOG; however, the HNP cooperate extensively with Post on any Post-identified terrorist leads. Per the Greek National Intelligence Service (EYP), the Aliens Bureau of the HNP is the primary Greek government entity designated to receive information pertaining to watchlisting, although other HNP divisions have shared the responsibility depending on the case.

-- EYP often receives watchlisting requests from foreign government services, but it lacks the law enforcement authority to take action. As a result, these requests are forwarded to the HNP by the EYP or directly by the requesting foreign government. EYP provides information to the HNP in the course of its own investigations and those of select liaison operations.

-- EYP claims that the GOG does not draw a distinction between EU and non-EU watchlisting standards. EYP emphasizes that privacy and data security laws in Greece are strict. EYP cannot order the arrest or detention of any suspects crossing the border; it can only provide supporting information. EYP maintains regional representatives at key points of entry who act only as intermediaries to borders and customs authorities. EYP can request collection of information about inbound and outbound individuals singled out for watchlisting and retains this information in its archives.

-- In most cases, EYP needs to provide a timeframe of the person's travel in order for the airport to search an airline's manifest to flag a specific traveler. EYP noted that monitoring cruises and ferries is more difficult than airports or land crossings.

Traveler Information Collection

3.(SBU) B. Traveler Information Collection: What are the country's policies (legislation, mandates, etc.) on collecting information from travelers arriving in the country? Are there different policies for air, sea, and land entry and for domestic flights? Who collects traveler information? What are the policies of the collecting agency to share that information with foreign governments? Does the host government collect Passenger Name Record (PNR) data on incoming commercial flights or vessels? Is this data used for intelligence or law enforcement purposes to screen travelers? Does host government have any existing treaties to share PNR data? If applicable, have advance passenger information systems (APIS), interactive advanced passenger information systems (IAPIS), or electronic travel authority systems been effective at detecting other national security threats, such as wanted criminals?

-- As Greece is a participant in the SIS, it conforms to EU

legislation and mandates on collecting information from travelers arriving in Greece. For example, when incoming travelers, whether by air, sea, or land, apply for a Schengen visa, their information is collected by the Schengen country

ATHENS 00002219 002 OF 009

where they apply and is centralized in the SQRQ1 countries, Third-Countrybases, SIS and the national database. The national database examines Interpol, Greek alerts, and local criminal records.

-- Traveler information is collected and accessed using SIS by the HNP. The HNP report that it shares collected traveler information on an ad-hoc basis with foreign governments. When the Greek authorities find a hit on a SIS record, they send the information to the SIRENE (Supplementary Information Request at the National Authority) office located at the Hellenic Police Headquarters in Athens. SIRENE responds by sending notification forms of the discovery to the Greek authorities at the port of entry, while the person is detained and placed in secondary for further questioning. The borders and customs authorities immediately alert the Greek Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) as appropriate. The ATU, reporting directly to the Ministry of Interior, arrives on the scene to detain and question the suspects.

-- According to the HNP, the integration of a European directive now mandates the use of Passenger Name Records (PNR) on incoming flights. (Note: The EU signed a July 23 agreement on the processing and transfer of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data by air carriers pre-flight to the Department of Homeland Security (HS). End Note.) The HNP reported that the reek authorities were only beginning to phase in the use of PNR data to examine traveler information prior to the landing of commercial aircrafts.

-- The HNP said they use this data for both intelligence and law enforcement purposes to screen travelers when they receive any derogatory information pertaining to the travelers. Post is not aware of any other existing treaties to share PNR data beyond the agreement between the EU and the U.S. The HNP said it is having ongoing conversations with commercial carries to access their PNR data.

-- Athens Embassy RSO reports that the Hellenic police have been very helpful in locating criminals and suspected terrorists wanted by the U.S. and INTERPOL. When a criminal is identified while applying for a U.S. visa at the Embassy and there is an INTERPOL Red Top, the Hellenic police have sent officers to make the arrest within minutes.

-- Advance passenger information systems (APIS), interactive advanced passenger information systems (IAPIS), or electronic travel authority systems are not used by the GOG.

Border Control and Screening

4.(S) C. Border Control and Screening: Does the host government employ software to screen travelers of security interest? Are all travelers tracked electronically, or only non-host-country nationals? What is the frequency of travelers being "waived through" because they hold up what appears to be an appropriate document, but whose information is not actually recorded electronically? What is the estimated percentage of non-recorded crossings, entries and exits? Do host government border control officials have the authority to use other criminal data when making decisions on who can enter the country? If so, please describe this authority (legislation, mandates, etc. What are the host government's policies on questioning, detaining and denying entry to individuals presenting themselves at a point of entry into the country? Which agency would question, detain, or deny entry? How well does information sharing function within the host government, e.g., if there is a determination that someone with a valid host-government visa is later identified with terrorism, how is this communicated and resolved internally?

-- Although it is a participant in the SIS, the GOG does not employ software to screen travelers of security interest. Documents are visually checked and random checks are conducted on certain flights. No travelers are tracked once they are in the Schengen zone. For non-Schengen flights, all third-country nationals (TCNs) have their documents checked

ATHENS 00002219 003 OF 009

at passport control and are recorded electronically. The HNP report that, although they do not use a formal screening technique, they receive derogatory information on passengers prior to their landing in Greece. Thereupon, the HNP is able to detain and question the suspected terrorist or criminal.

-- The GOG does not have a percentage estimate of non-recorded crossings, entries and exits, but it has the following estimates on illegal immigrants. Based on unpublished GOG statistics, the number of illegal immigrants in Greece is estimated at 77,647 year-to-date, 73,438 (2006), and 59,170 (2005). (Note: On November 5, Athens News media reported that Greece's Merchant Ministry estimated that an average 50,000 illegal immigrants try to cross into Greece every year with a record-breaking 13,151 illegal immigrants caught in September. Reports also claim that Greece will soon receive a 13.7 million euro boost from the EU to reinforce its land and sea borders from illegal immigration. End Note.)

-- Border control officials have the authority to use other criminal data available to them when they make decisions on who can enter the country. In these cases, the border security authorities can apprehend passengers once they cross into Greek territory. Based on the Schengen convention, police co-operation includes the right of information exchange between cross-border police services, as well as the right of cross-border surveillance and pursuit.

-- The HNP is the agency that would question, detain, or deny entry to any individual at the POEs who are associated with derogatory information. The GOG bases its policies on whether the individual is a legal or illegal immigrant to Greece. If the traveler is an illegal Third-Country-National, Post has received reports that the GOG can detain the individual for ninety days in a detention facility. If the individual is a legal TCN, the GOG must work with the host-government of the TCN to resolve the issue.

-- The border control authorities do not have the final authority on allowing travelers to enter Greece. This authorization must come from the Ministry of Interior. The border authorities send the file to the Ministry of Interior who makes the final decision on the traveler's case.

-- Although Greek ministries share information amongst themselves, bureaucratic hurdles remain. If there is a determination that someone with a valid Greek visa is later identified with terrorism, this issue is communicated and resolved on an ad-hoc basis by telephone between the Ministry of Interior and the HNP. Per para 12, information sharing among different Greek security services can be challenging due to territoriality and competition between them. However, the HNP and the Hellenic Coast Guard are proactive and cooperative in investigating terrorist threats.

-- The HNP noted that the GOG has formed an inter-ministerommittee on securing
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report, GOG minibe would continue to sric Collection

5.(SBU) D. Biometric Collection: Are biometric systems integrated for all active POEs? What are the systems and models used? Are all passengers screened for the biometric or does the host government target a specific population for collection (i.e. host country nationals)? Do the biometric collection systems look for a one to one comparison (ensure the biometric presented matches the one stored on the e-Passport) or one to many comparison (checking the biometric presented against a database of known biometrics)? If biometric systems are in place, does the host government know of any countermeasures that have been used or attempted to defeat biometric checkpoints? What are the host government's policies on collecting the fingerprints of travelers coming into the country? Which agency is responsible for the host government's fingerprint system? Are the fingerprint programs in place NIST, INT-I, EFTS, UK1 or RTID compliant? Are the fingerprints collected as flats or rolled? Which

ATHENS 00002219 004 OF 009

agency collects the fingerprints?

-- The GOG has not yet integrated biometric collection systems for all active POEs. The GOG has plans to conform to the European Visa Information System (VIS), which will be a database of fingerprints and facial scans consisting of all applicants for an entry visa into the Schengen group countries. The system was established in June 2004 by the European Council decision 2004/512/EC. Not all passengers are screened for biometrics, except for the scanning of passport data for those travelers from countries that do provide biometric data on the passport chip. The biometric collection systems look for a one-to-many comparison. Border authorities have told us that illegal immigrants sometimes use "crazy glue" to alter their fingerprints.

-- According to the Hellenic National Passport Center (NPC), the HNP has started capturing fingerprints using EuroDac for asylum seekers and irregular border-crossers. (Note: EuroDac is the European finger database that is sent in digitally to a central unit at the European Commission and automatically checked against other prints in the database. The purpose is to determine whether asylum seekers have applied for asylum in another EU Member state or have illegally transited through another EU Member State. End Note.)

-- The HNP are responsible for collecting hard-copy fingerprints from illegal immigrants at land POEs for entry into a national database. The Hellenic Coast Guard is the responsible entity for fingerprint collection at sea POEs. Fingerprints are taken for illegal immigrants or other persons of concern who are apprehended or taken into secondary. Fingerprints are EFTS compliant and collected as flats and rolled, without consistency. Greek authorities also routinely collect palm prints, (but not the side of hand) in addition to fingerprints.

Passports

6.(SBU) E. If the host government issues a machine-readable passport containing biometric information, does the host government share the public key required to read the biometric information with any other governments? If so, which governments? Does the host government issue

replacement passports for full or limited validity (e.g. the time remaining on the original passports, fixed validity for a replacement, etc.)? Does the host government have special regulations/procedures for dealing with "habitual" losers of passports or bearers who have reported their passports stolen multiple times? Are replacement passports of the same or different appearance and page length as regular passports (do they have something along the lines of our emergency partial duration passports)? Do emergency replacement passports contain the same or fewer biometric fields as regular-issue passports? Where applicable, has Post noticed any increase in the number of replacement or "clean" (i.e. no evidence of prior travel) passports used to apply for U.S. visas? Are replacement passports assigned a characteristic number series or otherwise identified?

-- According to the Greek passport agency, Greek authorities utilize a Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), which is changed every three months. This public key is shared with the U.S., Schengen-participating countries, the E.U., and Australia.

-- The Greek government does not issue special replacement passports, but will replace a lost or stolen passport with a full-validity passport with the appropriate documentation provided to the Greek police authorities. The replacement of a new passport takes two months after the HNP conducts a security clearance of the applicant. Each new passport is assigned a unique passport number and is the same appearance and page length as regular passports. As biometrics are not used, the passports do not contain biometric fields. The GOG does not issue passports to people who have already lost passports twice in the year. The Fraud Unit is housed in the HNP and has reported that it has taken 5,000 passports and fraudulent documents out of circulation year-to-date.

-- Emergency passports are not issued. If a Greek citizen has lost his or her passport, he or she can make an application at an overseas Greek consulate for a travel document that is valid to return to Greece. If a Greek

ATHENS 00002219 005 OF 009

citizen petitions an overseas consulate for an emergency passport to travel to another country, he or she is told to return to Greece with this travel document and make an application for a new passport. This can take as long as two months.

-- The passport agency is working towards electronic personalization by including facial biometrics as well as fingerprints, which will be compared manually and electronically. By 2009, the GOG plans to have its fingerprinting conform to the EU standards and plans to have these biometrics auto-interface with systems, such as Advanced Passenger Information Systems (APIS).

-- As of January 1, 2006, all Greek passports are issued centrally and only by the National Passport Center which is managed and staffed by the Hellenic Police. As a result, all passports are "clean" when they are used to apply for U.S. visas. All new passports have a machine-readable zone (MRZ) and a unique passport number, but do not yet contain biometric information. Emergency replacement passports do not contain biometric fields.

Fraud Detection -----

17. (SBU) F. Fraud Detection: How robust is fraud detection and how actively are instances of fraud involving documents followed up? How are potentially fraudulently issued documents taken out of circulation, or made harder to use?

-- Post believes that the GOG has an internal as well as external problem with fraudulent documents but is attempting to address the issue. In 2006, the Hellenic Bureau of Internal Affairs dismissed and suspended officers involved in corruption, primarily for forging documents and taking bribes. Most charges against police involved violation of duty, false certificates, abuse of power, corruption, and violations related to alien registration. Documents such as Hellenic national identity cards and passports are kept under strict control by the Passport Authority and the Hellenic Police.

-- The HNP does not place a high priority on punishment for fraud cases. The penalties for committing fraud are not stringent. In many cases, the offender can avoid prison by paying bail.

-- The GOG has a special fraud unit housed in the HNP that is dedicated to investigating cases of fraudulent documents. The HNP reports that it has taken 5,000 passports and fraudulent documents out of circulation year-to-date. Post will provide additional information on GOG's anti-fraud efforts after it meets with the GOG's fraud unit (septel).

Privacy and Data Security -----

8.(SBU) G. What are the country's policies on records related to the questioning, detention, or removal of individuals encountered at points of entry into the country? How are those records stored, and for how long? What are the country's restrictions on the collection or use of sensitive data? What are the requirements to provide notice to the public on the implementation of new databases of records? Are there any laws relating to identifying files (for example, records about

enforcement actions)? Does a non-citizen/resident have the right to sue the government to obtain these types of data?

-- Due to the restrictive laws on privacy and data, the GOG said that it collects information but does not disclose records related to the questioning, detention or removal of individuals encountered at points of entry. The GOG maintains data records in storage indefinitely. If these records belong to an illegal immigrant, these records are kept by the Aliens Bureau, again for an indefinite period of time.

-- Although the GOG has privacy laws similar to the U.S., these laws are considered more restrictive than the U.S. in

ATHENS 00002219 006 OF 009

certain circumstances. The GOG collects sensitive information when someone applies for a passport, ID card, or other form of national ID. The information collected as a result of a police arrest is not normally disseminated by the HNP, particularly if this information relates to a Greek citizen. A legal framework exists to obtain sensitive or classified data based on the parameters established by the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty per Para 9.

-- Although the European Union Data Protection Directive (EUDPD) requires that all EU members must adopt national regulations to standardize the protection of data privacy for citizens throughout the EU, the GOG is not yet fully compliant, and continues to work on these issues. The GOG has legislation requiring the issuance of a court order or warrant in order to collect information on a terrorist or criminal act.

-- A Greek citizen can access data held by homeland security agencies by petitioning a specific ministry or agency. In turn, the ministry or agency verifies the applicant and provides him or her with the requested information. Post is unaware of differences between an application to access raw data versus case files.

-- Prior to implementing a new database of record-keeping, the initiative must be examined in a public legislative process. As the legislative process is normally conducted as an open hearing/debate; therefore, a certain level of notice is provided to the public. Additionally, the GOG engages in a public affairs campaign to educate and notify citizens of this new data-collection initiative. For example, when the GOG increased penalties associated with vehicular traffic violations, it was required to advertise this change to the public. The notice of a new database must also appear in the daily gazette.

-- A non-citizen/resident has the right to sue the government to obtain personal data.

Immigration Data Base

9.(S) H. What computerized immigration databases are used to track entries and exits? Is the immigration database available at all ports of entry (POEs)? If immigration databases are available at some POEs, but not all, how does the host government decide which POEs will receive the tool? What problems, if any, limit the effectiveness of the systems? For example, limited training, power brownouts, budgetary restraints, corruption, etc.? How often are national immigration databases updated?

-- Per para 5, Greece participates in SIS to track entries and exits. It is updated on a regular basis. This database is available at all ports of entry. There are several allegations that corrupt guards allow people to pass through the borders without proper documentation.

-- A British Embassy source reported that the effectiveness of monitoring and screening capabilities is limited due to a lack of adequate training for police personnel. He also stated that the British Government was working on training several members of the Airport HNP on how to properly use the systems in place. Conversely, the HNP said that the borders/customs control authorities do receive regular and comprehensive training on the systems.

Watchlist and Information Sharing

10.(S) I. Watchlist and Information Sharing: Is there a name-based watchlist system used to screen travelers at POEs? What domestic sources of information populate the name-based watchlist, i.e. names of deported persons, terrorist lookouts, criminal wants/warrants? What international watchlists do the host government use for screening individuals, e.g. Interpol or TSA No Fly lists, UN, etc.? What bilateral/multilateral watchlist agreements exist between host government and its neighbors?

-- The GOG is part of the SIS and has access to EU lists and Interpol lists as stated in para 2. The GOG places alerts on names on an ad-hoc basis when it receives information from foreign governments.

ATHENS 00002219 007 OF 009

-- The GOG uses the SIS and the Greek national watchlists (NSIS). Greek authorities put local criminals on the NSIS

watchlist and suspected terrorists into the SIS system. Greek authorities claim that they always search all watchlists, including the Interpol list.

-- The TSA no-fly list is only provided to air carriers departing to the U.S. and not to agencies of other governments. The names on that list are shared with Interpol and provided by the Department of Homeland Security - National Terrorist Security Center.

-- Under the 1932 Extradition Treaty, the U.S. and the GOG exchange information on criminals through a formal process. In some instances, criminals may be able to circumvent this process if they claim Greek citizenship. However, U.S. representatives reported that the police continue to provide significant assistance even in these cases.

-- Based on the 1999 Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, there is robust cooperation between the U.S. security/intelligence agencies and the HNP, as well as with the Greek National Intelligence Services in tracking and investigating terrorist leads. Post believes that it is possible to develop Memorandums of Understanding between the U.S. and the GOG to encourage further data sharing on terrorists and terrorist activity. Besides the E.U. and the U.S., Post does not know of any other bilateral/multilateral watchlist agreements that exist between the GOG and its neighbors.

Biometrics

11.(SBU) J. Are biometric systems in place at ports of entry (air, land, sea)? If no, does host government have plans to install such a system? If biometric systems are available at some POEs, but not all, how does the host government decide which POEs will receive the tool? What biometric technologies, if any, does the host government use, i.e. fingerprint identification, facial recognition, iris recognition, hand geometry, retinal identification, DNA-based identification, keystroke dynamics, gait analysis? Are the systems ICAO compliant? Does the host government issue a machine-readable passport containing biometric information? If e-Passports are issued, what biometric information is included on the document, i.e. fingerprint, iris, facial recognition, etc. If not, does host government plan to issue a biometric document in the future? When?

-- Biometric systems are not yet in place at Greece's ports of entry (POEs) (air, land, sea), but the GOG indicated a desire to implement these systems in 2009. The GOG places a high priority on placing biometric systems at its two main airports in Athens and in Thessaloniki. The GOG will implement biometric systems in accordance with SIS and in compliance with EU legislation. We note that any traveler information collected and stored must be compliant with EU regulations.

-- The Greek law enforcement agencies have begun to capture fingerprints, photos, and biodata for illegal Third-Country Nationals (TCNs). This information is kept in storage indefinitely at the local Aliens Bureau. For TCNs that enter legally, their passports with the MRZ are swiped at the POEs and their biodata is scanned.

-- Although the GOG uses fingerprint identification and facial recognition using the photo on the travel document, it does not utilize iris recognition, hand geometry, retinal identification, DNA-based identification, keystroke dynamics, nor gait analysis. Systems are ICAO-compliant, meaning that countries participating in ICAO have the systems in place to potentially read each other's software in the future.

-- At present, the GOG issues a machine-readable passport, which has a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip. Border control authorities swipe only the MRZ of the passports. e-Passports are issued, but contain only biodata and a photo as data fields. Moreover, e-Passports do not incorporate fingerprint and iris identification. Facial recognition is only utilized to the extent that a photograph is used. GOG has stated that it plans to incorporate biometrics, but they have not provided Post with a definite timetable.

ATHENS 00002219 008 OF 009

Identifying Appropriate Partners

12.(S) K. Department would appreciate post's assessment of whether host government would be an appropriate partner in data sharing. Considerations include whether host government watchlists may include political dissidents (as opposed or in addition to terrorists), and whether host governments would share or use U.S. watchlist data inappropriately, etc. -- Are there political realities which would preclude a country from entering into a formal data-sharing agreement with the U.S? -- Is the host country's legal system sufficiently developed to adequately provide safeguards for the protection and nondisclosure of information? -- How much information sharing does the host country do internally? Is there a single consolidated database, for example? If not, do different ministries share information amongst themselves? -- How does the country define terrorism? Are there legal statutes that do so?

-- Post considers the GOG an appropriate partner in data sharing based on a high level of cooperation and coordination between Post and the GOG. Although challenges exist to

implementing a data sharing agreement, Post believes that GOG is committed to securing its borders and is open to receiving assistance and/or support to strengthen its screening and monitoring capabilities in the area of counterterrorism.

-- Although GOG maintains watchlists, it allows individuals it considers to be fleeing persecution access to its refugee-admission process, including refugees from Turkey who sympathize with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)) a State Department recognized Foreign Terror Organization (FTO). Nonetheless, Greece maintains one of the lowest asylum-seeker approval ratings in Europe at one percent per a 2006 United Nations Refugee Agency report. Post also believes that the GOG would not share or use the U.S. watchlist data inappropriately.

-- The GOG faces political hurdles in solidifying a formal data-sharing agreement with the U.S. The GOG is presently examining its data privacy and security laws. This issue remains controversial among the Greek populace as the GOG used to maintain records on the political affiliation of its citizens during the Junta era (1967-1974). At the same time, Post believes that most Greek government entities engaged in border security now consider illegal immigration to be their number-one security issue. They are looking for ways to identify and process the hundreds of refugees or immigrants arriving daily. Thus, the time appears ripe to approach GOG for closer cooperation.

-- Post believes Greece's legal system is sufficiently developed to adequately provide safeguards for the protection and nondisclosure of information on its citizens. There does not exist a single consolidated database for sharing data. Different ministries in the GOG share information among themselves on an ad-hoc basis.

-- Information sharing among different Greek security services can be challenging due to territoriality and competition between them. However, the HNP and the Hellenic Coast Guard are proactive and cooperative in investigating terrorist threats.

-- The GOG is seeking to improve its internal data sharing capabilities and has appointed an inter-ministerial committee dedicated to addressing immigration issues and improving border control. The Ministry of Interior, overseeing the HNP, and the Ministry of Mercantile Marine, overseeing the Hellenic Coast Guard, the EU utilizes a standard definition for terrorism, which deems that terrorism is illegal, Greece has a statutory defense for acts aimed at establishing or restoring democratic regimes, or in the exercise of fundamental civil or political rights. Moreover, the Greek constitution provides for the right of access to government-held information. Per the 2006 Human Rights

ATHENS 00002219 009 OF 009

Report, the GOG granted its citizens access to the data that it had collected upon their request.

-- Additionally, Post would like to highlight that it works closely with the GOG on database sharing, training of Greek security and customs officials, training of judicial personnel and the improvement of Greek border and cargo-container security through programs such as the Container Security Initiative (CSI). Post believes that the GOG is diligent in its apprehension and disruption efforts of alien smuggling routes and organization.

-- All U.S. agencies concerned with alien smuggling of all nationalities have received excellent cooperation from the Greek authorities. In July 2007, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the HNP conducted a joint investigation into one of the most prolific Iraqi alien smuggling organizations operating in Greece.

-- In addition, Athens Embassy LEGAT enjoys a good working relationship with various sections of the HNP. In 2006, LEGAT coordinated three separate training seminars in Crisis Negotiation, Interviews and Interrogation, and Counterterrorism. Over 170 police officers of all ranks participated.
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